



DRAFT Minutes of the Urchfont Parish Council (UPC) Full Council Meeting held in Urchfont Village Hall on Wednesday 13th September 2023

Present: Councillor's: Moscrop (PM - Chair), Bamber (SB), Hill (TR), Simon Holt (SH), Rotherham (PR) and Shears (SS)

Councilor for Urchfont & Bishops Cannings: Whitehead (PW)

Members of the Public (for all or part of the meeting): Brenda Potter, Nicky Hammond, Stepanie Szakalo, Barbara & David Myers, Christopher Grant, Malcolm Taylor, Rab Doycf, Corrine Rotherham, Peter Cook

A. INTRODUCTION

- 1. Welcome by the Chair** – PM welcomed all to the meeting.
- 2. Apologies:** Cllrs Rotherford (JR) & Gibb (HG)
- 3. Nomination(s) for Councillor Co-Option**

BL confirmed that a valid application had been received from Sally Shears, PM invited Sally to give a brief overview of herself. Sally stated that she had lived in the area since 1986 and was a showbusiness talent agent.

Proposal	Proposer	Secunder	Resolution
To approve the co-option of Sally Shears to the Council with immediate effect	PM	TH	AGREED unanimously

Sally (SS) signed her acceptance of office declaration in the presence of BL and then took her seat with the Council.

B. PLANNING – See Separate Minutes

C. SEPTEMBER FULL COUNCIL MEETING

- 1. Declarations of Interest** – PR declared a pecuniary interest in item 5c.
- 2. Time set aside for Public Participation and External Reports**

Statement by David Myers (Text submitted to Clerk after the meeting) – “At the July Council meeting, when she was speaking about the Shop’s request for funding, Maria Kemp made defamatory and slanderous comments about me. I am here to set the records straight and clear my name! I was accused of being to blame for the deferment of the application from the April to the May Council meeting, and the delay in payment being made to the Shop following that meeting. The Councillors and Clerk knew I was not responsible for either, yet didn’t challenge her, thus making this Council unwittingly party to her slander. I have taken legal advice, which says that by publishing the various unsubstantiated allegations on a publicly available website, the Council has inadvertently given me a very strong case against it for Deformation of Character, and Libel. Mrs Kemp also implied I had sent ‘rude and abusive emails’ to the Shop committee. Whilst the Council would not have been aware that this claim, too, was fabricated (I have never sent ANY emails to the committee, rude and abusive, or otherwise), it was published without being verified. All I want is for it to be made perfectly clear that the statements made about me by Mrs Kemp were without foundation and it was Parish Council procedures which were responsible for the delays she alleges were down to me. In addition, I feel I am owed an apology from UPC for publishing Mrs Kemp’s claims, knowing they were false. I wish this to then be an end to the matter.”
David Myers 13th September 2023

Corrine Rotherham – expressed concern about works going on to remove the bank behind Yew Tree Cottage

in The Bottom, Contractors vehicles have crossed land which is not registered with the Land Registry and not owned by this cottage. BL said that he had received pictures of the works just before the meeting from concerned owners of properties in Walnut Close which are immediately above Yew Tree Cottage. PW stated that this is not an issue to be dealt with by UPC, if owners in Walnut Close have concerns then they should contact WC Building Control.

(Post meeting note: it is understood that contractors are removing a landslip which had buried a shed behind the Cottage, they have not been contracted to install a retaining wall.)

Philip Whitehead as a member of the public made the following comments on three items:

- i. The Local Plan Consultation is now on the WC website, he encouraged any comments to be submitted via the website.
- ii. A pick up when and where you want bus service is now available locally, phone to arrange a pick up.
- iii. Regrettably Community Speed Watch was disbanded in Urchfont, partly due to the lack of support from the police. New PCC is now actively encouraging police to attend speed watch sessions, as a result speeding tickets issued at Speed Watch sites have increased from 194 to over 4000 in the recent past – drivers should be very aware. PW would like to see Speed Watch reintroduced in Urchfont.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9th August 2023

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To approve and sign the minutes unchanged as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	TH	SH	AGREED with two abstentions due to absence from meeting

4. **Action List Status Review and Update Reports from the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th August 2023** – BL stated that apart from one, no updates had been received from councillors. As a result he had updated the listing based on his awareness and would distribute it to all councillors for review and updating.

ACTION: FC/65/23 - ALL

5. Finance

a. **To receive a Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation as at 31st August 2023** – BL confirmed that the Financial Statement and Bank Reconciliation had been distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting and that the accounts are in good order. Completion of the external audit of the 22/23 accounts is still awaited and is expected later in September. No questions were asked.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
To ratify the August spend details published in the Bank Reconciliation statement and on screen	TH	SB	AGREED with one abstention

b. **Redhorn News Contribution** – in the absence of Paul Scarfe, who had phoned BL just before this meeting to apologise for not sending the requested clarification on the contribution required, it was decided to defer this item until the October meeting when he has indicated that he can attend.

The Chair closed the meeting for Public Participation – Brenda Potter stated that Redhorn News had funds to cover 23/24, she believed that they were looking for funds in 24/25. This would need to be made clear by Mr. Scarfe in October.

The Chair re-opened the Council meeting BL to confirm attendance at October meeting

ACTION: FC/66/23 – BL

c. **Quote for tree works in the allotments** – Works to thin out and remove a large limb had been quoted at £300 by PR. Under the financial regulations PM and BL had approved this work subject to ratification at this meeting.

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
That the decision to fund tree works to the value of £300 be ratified.	SH	SB	AGREED with one abstention

However, TH stated that this tree had self-seeded and now had a split trunk, he questioned whether it would be better to fell the tree now to avoid further issues in due course. It was agreed that no work should be undertaken pending attempts to secure at least three quotes for felling the tree, a decision will hopefully be taken at the October meeting.

6. Lead Councillor, Working Groups, Clerk & other written Reports (attached at Appendix I on website version only)

- a. **Clerks Report** – nothing to add or clarify
- b. **Councillor reports** – 1st Responders - nothing to add or clarify in the absence of JR.

7. Meeting Attendance – Proposal to amend Standing Orders Clause 6 – PM explained that reduced numbers of councillors recently had invoked use of this clause which requires 6 to be in attendance to prevent ratification of any decisions at a subsequent meeting. Having checked that legislation does not prevent changing the wording of this clause, PM proposed that the wording is changed to the following:

Proposal	Proposer	Seconder	Resolution
Decisions taken at a meeting at which less than half of the currently elected / co-opted members are present shall be subject to ratification at the next meeting.	PM	TH	AGREED with one abstention

Quorum for Full and Planning meetings remain the same at 4 and 5 respectively.

8. CPRE Best Kept Village – PR had volunteered to collect the Standard from Hindon, BL to provide PC contact details.

ACTION: FC/67/23 – BL

SB confirmed that Upper Crust had been approached to supply food for around 35 to 40 members of the presentation / receiving party at a cost of £2.50 per head. Those volunteering to assist preparation for the lunch should meet at the Hall at around 11.30am, lunch will be served at around 1.30pm. BL suggested that the Standard should be temporarily installed in the grassed area outside the Hall, with the aim of moving it to Pond Green after the ceremony as previously.

It was agreed that presentations of the 5 Plaques and Certificates will be made to PM, SB, Sue Smith, BL and SH. PM will end the presentation with a Vote of Thanks.

(Post Meeting Note – Presentation details submitted to CPRE on 16th September 2023)

9. Lead Councillor Roles and Responsibilities – PM stated that now we have a new councillor the list needs to be reviewed in due course to reallocate where appropriate. She added that SB is temporarily undertaking the UPC Highways Survey role, the next survey will be completed on 25th September with the assistance of TH and Martyn Hollyman. Uphill roads need to be included as agreed at the August meeting.

10. Speed Indicator Signs of the B3098 – No update was given, installation is awaited by an approved contractor.

11. Urchfont Parish Neighbourhood Plan (see minutes of last WG meeting at Appendix II) – TH reported that 93 responses to the householder questionnaire had been received, these are now being analysed. It is intended to hold a public meeting on 4th November 2023 between 10am and 12 noon to brief and consult with the community on progress to date and the way forward, the WG will publish full details in Redhorn News. PW commented that it is highly likely that the 5 Year Land Supply will be reduced to 4 years, this has now gone to Regulation 19 Consultation.

12. UPEG – SH indicated that UPEG may disband as a focus group due to lack of representation from other groups in the community.

13. Wildflower Planting / Sunflower Trail – TH stated that the bank behind the lay-by in Crookwood Lane planted by members of UPEG is a disgrace, it has not been properly maintained since being seeded, It needs to be maintained at least 3 times per year. PW suggested that Acorn Builders should be approached to undertake the first couple of maintenance sessions as the development of Hazel Green has totally prevented any activity on this bank or the lay-by, it was agreed that SH would pursue this option and then maybe consider asking the UPC grounds maintenance contractor to undertake in due course.

ACTION: FC/68/23 – SH

The excellent sunflower trail organised by Nick Plank from Lydeaway towards Urchfont was highly applauded, including the provision of seating along part of the trail. It provided a very colourful spectacle for those walking the path. UPC recorded a vote of thanks in this respect.

14. Update on Current Issues not covered by above agenda items – PM made the following comments:

Following the statement made by Mr. Myers earlier in the meeting, PM confirmed that UPC had followed processes and procedures in a very transparent manner including the democratic voting process. UPC does not in any way condone defamatory comments or attacks of a personal nature, UPC will carefully review what is published in future recognising that minutes need to record and reflect what is actually said at a meeting or specifically requested by a member of the public in writing.

For accountability reasons and to avoid potential difficulties if and when an FOI request is received, all emails to the Parish Council should be addressed to clerk@urchfont-pc.gov.uk and not to individual councillor personal email addresses.

15. External Meetings – None Reported

16. Other Reports from Councillors – PM stated that due to availability issues, it may be necessary to change the October meeting date, details will be made available as soon as possible.

(Post Meeting Note: the meeting has now been changed from Wednesday 11th to Wednesday 18th October)

17. Items for Future Agenda

Proposed community notice board in the Community Shop Car Park
Proposal to respond to all emails to UPC within 10 days

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 18th October 2023 - 7.00pm Village Hall (Conference Room) – NOTE CHANGED DATE

APPENDIX I TO SEPTEMBER 2023 UPC MINUTES

a. CLERK'S REPORT

- i. **Finance** – Copies of the Financial Summary and Bank Reconciliation on 31st August 2023 will be distributed to all councillors prior to the meeting. The accounts are in good order.
- ii. **Councillor Vacancies** – The Council currently has FOUR vacancies, with one application for co-option to be considered at this meeting – Sally Shears.
- iii. **CPRE Best Kept Village Competition** – Having won the County Round competition, we need to collect the Standard from the previous winner and prepare fully for the presentations in the Village Hall on Sunday 24th September 2023.

Bob Lunn, Clerk to the Council

b. COUNCILLORS WRITTEN REPORTS

First Responders - At last a response and some success ! Neil Jones is my neighbour – works from home and sounds ideal (I found out by chance at a social evening last Friday !)

In any event although I will not be at the next council meeting this should be announced plus in addition to Carol Blood in Wedhampton and now Cris (no second name in Market Lavington) at least we have improved coverage plus Hopefully Helen you can re-apply in January – and maybe others now they know they will not be alone. Unfortunately the training for Neil Jones has been delayed as they organisers have COVID!

Cllr John Rotherham

APPENDIX II TO SEPTEMBER 23 UPC MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NP WORKING GROUP ON 29 AUG 23 IN URCHFONT VILLAGE HALL

Present: Stuart Davies (SD); Rob Dolan (RD); Trevor Hill (TH); Simon Holt (SH); Linda Jennings (LJ); Dave Mottram (DM); Sally Stephens (SS)

Apologies: Debbie Carr-Jones (DCJ); Ken Mortimer (KM)

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 25 Jul 23 had been approved by the WG and passed to UPC. TH

confirmed that no issues were raised. The UPC Chair and her deputy had been invited to attend a NP WG meeting and it was left that they might come along in the future.

2. QUESTIONNAIRE

a). Responses

DM reported a total of 77 completed questionnaires so far, with 2 more days remaining for responses. WG members felt this was a very good outcome, representing over 10% of the households in the Parish.

b). Analysis

DM had completed an analysis of the first 2 questions and had circulated it to WG members. The outcome was not surprising, with the greens, pub, pond, village hall and shop notable as features to be protected and retained/improved. There was some discussion about the comments made in answer to questions 3, 4, and 5 given that they were much more lengthy and diverse.

Decision: All WG members would analyse the responses to questions 3, 4, and 5 and make a list of the key points they found

Action: All NP WG members to note - and circulate their key points to WG colleagues by 13 Sep 23.

c). Publicity

The issue of having a new NP page on the UPC website or having a unique website had been discussed at the previous meeting. WG members had a contact in Urchfont village who would be able to design a suitable web site/page. It was agreed that a page on the UPC website was probably the most appropriate and cheapest option, especially as the existing UWLNP had its own website area.

Decision: The UPC website was the best location for NP documents and formal publicity

Actions:

- DM would contact the Parish Clerk to seek approval for a new UPNP page on the UPC website
- Thereafter, DM/SH would introduce the web designer to the Parish Clerk

The subject of publicity with local residents was discussed. It was felt that a public meeting would enable the WG to disseminate questionnaire information, and open a forum for discussion on issues of concern and future NP objectives. SD suggested that having groups seated round tables would better encourage and facilitate discussion, rather than rows of seats. NP WG members could be present at each table.

Decisions:

- A group of separate tables, rather than rows of chairs, would be laid out for the presentation/forum

- Sat 4 Nov was agreed as a provisional date for a presentation and discussion forum

Action: SS would book the village hall for a public meeting on Sat 4 Nov, 1000 -1200hrs

3. SA/SEA (Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment)

LJ had gathered some details on the guidance for producing a SA/SEA report and some details on the physical constraints in the Parish. However, she stated that it was unclear whether it was necessary to start the assessment process by sending a "Screening" statement to Wiltshire Council. It was agreed that a SEA would likely be required, given the potential impacts of building more houses in a parish with a number of environmentally sensitive features.

Decision: Further information was needed to determine how the NP WG should proceed with SEA Assessment

Action: LJ would contact the Strategic Planning Section of Wiltshire Council to seek advice on the need and form of SEA.

4. FUNDING

It was understood that funding was available now from Locality for producing Neighbourhood Plans. SH stated that if previous funding for the UWLNP from Locality had been given after 2005, it was likely that this sum would be taken into account when requesting further funds for UPNP. The activities which would require funding were discussed and included production of the SA/SEA, publicity materials and possibly referendum costs. To ensure complete impartiality, it was suggested that an independent assessor of voting procedures might be required.

Decisions:

- An application to Locality should be made once the funding rules and arrangements were understood
- Estimates of the costs of an independent assessor and of running a referendum were required

Actions:

- SH would check the amount of Locality funding for the previous UWLNP and the date of its grant with the Parish Clerk
- SH would speak to the Electoral Commission to establish the cost of an independent assessor and referendum
- DM would seek funding for UPNP from Locality

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

TH reported that the number of households in the parish to which deliveries were made were: 480 in Urchfont, (including Crookwood Lane) 20 in Lydeaway and 50 in Wedhampton.

All to note.

DM questioned whether the farming community should be represented on the NP WG. At this stage, WG members could not identify any obvious volunteers.

All to note.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 26 Sep 23 in the Village Hall commencing 7pm.

All to note.